GHWAYS ND · BY · AYS of MUSIC

HUGH A.
CLARKE.

Highways and Byways of Music

By

Hugh A. Clarke, Mus. Doc.

Professor of the Science of Music, University of Pennsylvania ; Author of "Music and the Comrade Arts," "The Elements of Vocal Harmony," etc.

Silver, Burdett and Company

New York Boston Chicago

PREFACE.

The material of this collection of essays is drawn from lectures on musical topics delivered on various occasions. In the essay on "Myths" the universality of certain striking coincidences is pointed out, and an argument for the great antiquity of the Art is drawn. That on "Facts" is designed as a pendant to the preceding one. "Literary Men and Music" is a plea for the fuller recognition, on the part of literary men that Music as a "great art" is of equal rank with her sister arts.

In "The Teutonic Element in Music" an endeavor is made to substitute for the theory, advocated by many, that "Art Music" is an out-

growth of Folk-song, the theory that the Folk-song is simply an indication of racial temperament out of which "Art Music" may or may not grow, and that the German branch alone, of the great Teutonic family, was possessed of the requisite temperamental conditions for this growth.

In "Curiosities of Musical History" the object is to exhibit the strong contrasts between the ancient and the modern ways of viewing the Art. In "Modern Tendencies," at the risk of being classed among the "laudatores tempori acti," *the Author has attempted to strike a balance between the losses and gains of the Art, since the first quarter of the century just ended.*

H. A. CLARKE.

Philadelphia, Pa.,
April 24, 1901.

CONTENTS.

Highways and Byways of Music.

I.

SOME MUSICAL MYTHS.

A STRIKING proof of the great antiquity of music may be found in the fact that so many myths have grown up concerning its origin. That it has always been held in the highest estimation is proved by the fact that its invention or discovery has always been attributed to some beneficent divinity or sage. Many of the oldest and most

widespread myths cluster around that humblest of all musical instruments, the drum, and its still humbler relatives, the clapper and rattle. An early Greek myth credits Rhea, the mother of the gods, with the invention of the drum, for the purpose of amusing the infant Jupiter. A Latin myth tells us that the first musical sounds heard in the world were the strokes of the hammer on the anvil. This must be a rather late myth, since it ignores the ages of stone and bronze that preceded the iron age. It also sounds like an echo of the Biblical story of the invention of music by Jubal, the son of Tubal Cain, the first blacksmith, and of that other story of Pythagoras's discovery of the consonances by listening to the sounds made on the anvil by hammers of different weights.

There are many varieties of myths, and the different varieties shade off into

each other in so many ways that classification is very difficult, if not impossible. We are apt to make the mistake of crediting them to the poetic insight of their inventors, but it is now generally admitted that in their earliest, crudest forms they are nothing but ignorant attempts to explain natural phenomena in terms that to the savage mind are flatly prosaic. To our apprehension it sounds imaginative and poetical to describe the retreat of darkness before the sun as the death of Typhon, struck through by the arrows of "far-darting Apollo," but to the inventors of the myth it was a literal explanation of the fact. In South America there is a tribe of Indians who have a drum god, who speaks to them in the sound of the drum.

To the simple mind of the savage, everything, animate and inanimate, possesses a spirit and volition like his own;

it is his theory of natural phenomena. Therefore, when he beats his drum and says that its spirit speaks to him, he is not poetizing but giving what to him is a scientific explanation of the fact. When, after the lapse of time, the meaning of this original explanation has been forgotten, or a new explanation of the phenomenon has been grafted on the old, and an attempt is made to explain the old myth, the conscious stage of myth-making begins. Thus the myth in which this same tribe describes the invention of the drum evidently originated in a later age, when the facts had been forgotten.

According to this story, Arawanili, a great chief of the olden time,—somewhat like Hiawatha,—was walking one day by the river-side, pondering sorrowfully on the ills and afflictions of mankind, when a beautiful nymph arose from the river, and giving him a small branch which she

carried, told him to plant it and afterwards gather the fruit. He did so, and the fruit turned out to be a large gourd, and from this gourd they make the drum called the maraca. Although the myth stops here, the presumption is that all the evils about which Arawanili was pondering so sadly vanished at the first beat of the drum, and mankind lived happily ever after.

A myth of this kind is much more than an attempt to explain a fact; it tries to give a circumstantial account of how this fact came into existence.

It is quite possible that Arawanili may have been a real person, a man of mark in his day, and the invention of the drum has been credited to him in virtue of that strong tendency, not yet extinct by any means, that makes mankind exalt their heroes by fathering on them all unclaimed waifs and strays of discovery and inven-

tion, just as Guido of Arezzo has been credited with every musical discovery or invention that existed in the eleventh century.

There is a third class of myths, namely, those which are invented long after, when the force and meaning of the original myths have been entirely forgotten, but having been inherited as part of the ancestral belief, poets and philosophers attempt to "spiritualize" them. The Greeks were the great authors of myths of this class, and their genius has woven around them some of the loftiest and also some of the worst teachings the world possesses.

In the consideration of myths it is necessary to keep these distinctions always in mind, although it is never possible to say with exactness just how much of the story belongs to one or to the other class. The incongruous mixture of

dissimilar subjects found in many myths is an evidence that several older myths have been fused together into one. Thus, in a drum myth of some North American Indians, when the waters of the deluge began to subside they were divided into four quarters and were swallowed by four huge tortoises; and the tortoises were of use, not only as great reservoirs, but as great drums, because the first men beat on their backs with drumsticks. Music and cosmogony seem to have gotten into an inextricable tangle in this story. Its crudeness is proof of its great antiquity, whereas in the following myth we have an example of the third class, in which conscious poetic invention is displayed. There were twelve celestial maidens who came down to the earth every day to dance in a magic ring, accompanying themselves on small drums. They were watched

one day by a young hunter, White Hawk, who was rewarded by hearing the most ravishing music that mortal ears had ever heard.

One very curious fact is to be noted in many of the musical myths coming from widely separated parts of the world, namely, that there is always some connection between music and water. In the first myth related it was a water nymph who taught Arawanili the use of the drum; in the other the tortoises that were used as the first drums were also the reservoirs for the waters of the deluge.

In India, Sarasvati, the wife of Brahma, is the inventor of music, and also the goddess of streams. Again, in the Egyptian myth of the invention of music the same conjunction appears: Thoth (the Egyptian Mercury), walking one day on the banks of the Nile, chanced to strike with his foot the shell of a tortoise

which lay drying in the sun and wind. Some of the ligaments of the tortoise were still attached to the shell, drawn tight by the heat, and they gave forth a musical sound when struck by the foot of the god. He, being of an observant turn of mind, picked up the shell and twanged the ligaments with his finger, and the lyre was invented. The Greeks borrowed this story from the Egyptians and improved on it. According to their version, Hermes, the wind god, who was born in the morning one beautiful day in May, was so precocious a child that by the middle of the day he was out taking a walk. When he found a tortoise he captured it and made a lyre out of its shell, and at once began to play most ravishingly. It is rather curious that the tortoise should appear in two musical myths coming from places so widely separated as Egypt and South America.

One of the most beautiful of the musical myths of the imaginative poetic class, is the Greek story of the descent of Orpheus to the lower regions to persuade Pluto to restore his dead wife Euridice. So great was his skill on the lyre that, in Dryden's words, he "drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek," and the gloomy monarch consented to let Euridice return from the under world to the earth. One condition was exacted: Orpheus, while pursuing the long, toilsome journey to the upper world, was straitly charged not to look behind him at the painfully-following Euridice. He had almost reached the sunlit world when, filled with longing to see his beloved Euridice, he turned, and with a sad cry she vanished forever from his sight.

In the myths concerning the invention of pipes or flutes, both water and wind play a large part. The "great god Pan"

was enamored of the nymph Syrinx, who fled from him, and taking refuge in the river was changed into a reed. Pan rushed after her, and as he threw his arms about the clump of reeds in which she had taken refuge, a gust of wind blew through them making a beautiful sound; he was so charmed with it that he cut the reeds and fashioned them into that oldest and most universal of musical instruments, the pandean pipe or syrinx. This myth has been exquisitely done in verse by Mrs. Browning with the omission of that part relating to the nymph.

The Chinese have a very circumstantial account of the invention of the pipe. In the reign of the Emperor Hoang-ti, there lived a great musician, Ling-lun. Although music had been bestowed on the Flowery Kingdom many years before by a goddess, it was as yet nothing but a confused mass of sounds without order or

system; so Hoang-ti commanded Ling-lun to arrange the musical sounds in some regular system. How to accomplish this troubled Ling-lun sorely; so he wandered off in deep thought to the land where the bamboo grows. Taking one of these canes, he cut it off between the knots, pressed out the pith and blew into it, when it gave a beautiful sound. It happened that this sound was exactly that of his own voice when he spoke, and also that made by the murmur of the waters of the river Hoang-ho, which ran near by. "Behold!" he cried, "this is the fundamental sound of nature, from which all other sounds must be derived." Just then the magic bird called Foung-hoang settled, with his mate, on a tree near by and began to sing; to Ling's delight, its first note was that of the pipe he had just made. Then all the winds were hushed, and all the birds in the world

ceased singing, that they might listen to the magic bird and his mate. As they sang, Ling-lun kept cutting off bamboos and tuning them to the notes of their songs, six to the notes of the male, six to the notes of the female. When he had finished he bound the canes together and took them to the Emperor ; they became the standard scale of China to this day.

Leaving out the mythological part of this story, it probably embodies the discovery of some reformer of the scale. Chinese vocal music is founded on the pentatonic scale,—the notes of the male bird. Their instrumental music is founded on the chromatic scale,—a union of the notes of the male and female birds. In this story the water and the reeds again make their appearance, but the only part assigned to the wind is total silence.

Nareda, the inventor of the vina,—a kind of lyre peculiar to India,—was called the "giver of water," and his first instrument was made of the shell of a tortoise. In many of the feats ascribed to him he resembles the Hermes of Greek, and Thoth of Egyptian mythology. The persistence with which wind, water, and tortoise reappear in the myths of widely-separated peoples is a strong argument for the community of origin of the human family; but any attempt to account for the existence of these myths is necessarily very uncertain. Some students of mythology incline to the opinion that the drum, or back of the tortoise, is the symbol of the sky,—the water-carrier; and that the wind (Hermes-Thoth-Nareda), is the player, and that there was a time when to say, "Hermes sounds the lyre" or "Nareda beats the drum," meant exactly what we

mean when we say "the wind blows" or "it thunders"; and these phrases were not a whit more poetical to the people who used them than "it rains" or "it blows" are to us.

From a very early period the flute was regarded as an inferior instrument to the lyre. This superiority of the lyre, and also the fact that the flute was the earlier invention, is illustrated in several myths. According to one Greek story, Minerva used to play the flute, but threw it away because Juno laughed at the faces she made when playing, and took to the lyre instead. The shepherd Marsyas found the flute she threw away, and became such a virtuoso on it that he challenged Apollo to a trial of skill. Apollo, when a shepherd keeping the flocks of Admetus, had also played the flute, and he, too, had discarded it for the lyre. The nine Muses were chosen as a jury. As a matter of

course Apollo was victorious, and he was ungenerous enough to revenge himself on his adversary for challenging him by skinning him. Perhaps this is only a mythical way of setting forth the fate meted out to a defeated candidate by the musical critics of the time.

Plutarch tells a story that illustrates this disparaging opinion of the flute. Antisthenes, to whom some one spoke in high terms of the performance of the flute-player, Ismenias, replied: "He must be but a wretched human being, otherwise he could not be so excellent a piper."

The old myths all tell strange stories of the wonderful power of music. Orpheus tamed wild animals and "made the mountain-tops that freeze" bow themselves to listen to his lyre. Amphion built the walls of Thebes by compelling the stones to range themselves in order

at the sound of his music. Arion, who failed to charm the sailors, so charmed a dolphin by his lyre that when the sailors threw him overboard the dolphin carried him safely to the shore.

These Greek stories have a curious analogue in far-off Finland, in the person of the musician Wainamoinen. In the *Kalevala*, the epic poem of Finland, his performance is thus described: "He raised his clear, limpid voice, and his fingers danced over the strings, while joy answered to joy and song to song. Every beast of the forest and fowl of the air came about him to listen to his sweet voice and taste the music of his strains. The wolf deserted the swamp, the bear deserted his forest lair; they ascended the hedge, and the hedge gave way; then they climbed the pine tree and sat in the branches. The old black-bearded monarch of the forest and all the hosts of

Tapio hastened to listen; his wife, the brave lady of Tapiola, put on her blue socks and red laces and climbed on a hollow tree to listen. The eagle came down from the cloud, the falcon dropped through the air, the swan forsook the limpid waves; the swift lark, the light swallow, and the graceful finches perched on the shoulders of the god. Even the sun and moon stood still. The sun dropped his golden shuttle and the moon her silver comb, so ravished were all things at the sound of the voice of Wainamoinen."

This belief in the magic power of music persisted even during the most notable period of Greek culture. Plato, the greatest of philosophers, in his *Republic*, a work designed to set forth an ideal body politic, says: "Such power resides in music that the invention of a new kind of song is fraught with danger to the state, for

when the music changes, the laws of the state always change with it." For this reason he considered music a very important branch of education, but insisted that the Dorian and Phrygian modes, which were considered by the Greeks to be the "manly" modes, fit for warriors to sing, should be the only modes taught. He decreed that the lyre should not have more than eight strings; and also that if any musician in his model state should compose a new tune, he should be rewarded for his ingenuity, then peremptorily banished on pain of death if he returned. It is rather strange that he singles out the Ionian scale especially for his strictures, disparaging it for its expression of softness and indolence, when this Ionian scale corresponds exactly with our modern major scale; still stranger is the fact that centuries after, when that modification of the Greek system known

as the ecclesiastical system of music was in vogue, the Church censured the Ionian scale for the very same reasons, calling it the " lascivious tone."

It seems inexplicable to the modern mind that such opinions could be held by one of the greatest thinkers the world has ever known, hence no surprise need be felt that simple-minded barbarians should attribute such potent effects to music.

Some of the strangest of these myths concerning the power of music come, as might be expected, from the far East. In India there is a belief that certain kinds of music are appropriate to certain seasons of the year, and that fatal effects will follow the performance of a piece of music at an inappropriate season. There is a story of a certain musician who was famed for his skill in playing the winter music. In the course of his wanderings

he arrived at the court of a king who, knowing of his skill and being very desirous of hearing this winter music, commanded him to play it, although it was midsummer. The poor musician protested, but the king insisted, hinting that if the player did not comply he would relieve him of his head. The unhappy musician, before beginning to play, waded into the Ganges until he was submerged to the neck, but the precaution was vain, for no sooner had he begun than flames burst from his head, and he was burnt to ashes, to the great delight of the gentle monarch.

There is a Chinese story about a great musician of ancient times, who made a tune into which he put such wonderful expression that he declared that if ever in after ages a musician should arise who could play it just as it ought to be played, he would not only understand what the

tune meant, but would be able to conjure up the very voice and appearance of the author. Some thousands of years after his death, there lived a far-famed musician who spent all his time in practicing this wonderful tune, in the hope that this vision might be vouchsafed to him, but it never came. One day a young man came to him and after prostrating himself and knocking three times on the ground with his forehead, said, " O Father of music, teach me to play on the kin " (the lute of scholars). The old man began to question the youth, to discover what knowledge of music he possessed. At last he asked him if he knew this wonderful tune of the ancient musician. The young man replied, " Yes, and whenever I play it I see a venerable old man, who smiles on me and commends my performance in a soft, sweet voice." On hearing this the master rose up, prostrated himself,

and knocked six times on the ground with his forehead, and said, "Thou art the master and I am the pupil. For many years have I studied this tune, but never yet has the vision been granted to me."

There must surely have been some strange power in these old tunes that is not possessed by any modern tune, except that mysterious one that nobody knows, that is said to have caused the death of the old cow.

The making of myths was not confined to the ancient world or to barbarians. The intellectual darkness of the Middle Ages furnished a prolific soil for the growth of myths as strange as any that the simplest-minded savage could invent. In their ignorance of history and chronology, and of the simplest scientific knowledge, the authors of those days jumbled together facts and fictions, sacred and

profane history, Greeks and antediluvians, with delightful unconsciousness of the resulting absurdities. One grave author asserts that Pythagoras, who is claimed by the Greeks as the discoverer of the consonances, made his discovery in the following way: he was taking a walk and happened to pass the smithy where Tubal Cain was at work, and observed that the hammers he was using gave sounds that differed in pitch according to the ratios of their weights. It is curious that for centuries it was accepted as a fundamental tenet of musical faith, that Pythagoras did discover the ratios of sounds in this way, when some scoffer arose and repeated the experiment and proved that the belief was all wrong.

Another author denies that Pythagoras discovered the consonances, and gives a circumstantial account of their discovery by Tubal Cain himself, in the following

words: " The Master of History (Moses) says that Tubal was the father of those that play on the cithara and other instruments; not that he was the inventor of these instruments, for they were invented long afterward, but he was the inventor of music,—that is, of the consonances. As the pastoral life was rendered delightful by his brother, so he, working in the smith's art and delighted with the sound of the hammers, by means of their weights carefully investigated the proportions and consonances arising from them; and because he had heard that Adam prophesied of the two tokens, he, lest this art which he had invented should be lost, wrote and engraved the whole of it on two pillars, one of which was made of marble that it might not be washed away by the deluge, and the other of brick, that it might not be dissolved by fire. And Josephus saith that the marble

pillar is still extant in the land of Syria." This minute account certainly disposes forever of the claim of the Greeks that Pythagoras was the original discoverer.

I cannot forbear a quotation from another ponderous writer which, while not strictly a myth, illustrates the kind of reasoning that piles up these monstrous fabrications on the slenderest foundations. This writer gives a very luminous account of the cure of Saul's madness by David's harping. Taking as his text the words, "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul that David took a harp and played, so Saul was refreshed and the evil spirit departed from him," he discourses as follows: "But we assert that David freed Saul by the sole force and efficacy of music, in order to demonstrate which, let it be observed that those applications which unlock the pores, remove obstructions,

dispel vapors, and cheer the heart, are best calculated to cure madness and allay the fury of the mind. Now, music produces these effects, for as it consists in sounds generated by the motion of the air, it follows that it will attenuate the spirits, which by that motion are rendered warmer and more quick in their action, and so dissipate at length the melancholy humor. On the contrary, where it is necessary to relax the spirits and prevent the wounding or affecting of the membranes of the brain, in this case it is proper to use slow progressions of sounds, that those spirits, and the biting vapors which ascend thither from the stomach, spleen, and hypochondria may be quietly dismissed. Therefore, the music of David might appease Saul in either of these two ways of attenuation, or dismission; by the one he might have expelled the melancholy from the cells of the brain, or by

the other he might have dissolved it, and sent it off in thin vapors by *insensible perspiration.*" And so on, through a long chapter.

The myth-making tendency seems to be perennial. It crops out at all times and in the most unexpected places; no sooner does an individual become famous or notorious, but the inventive faculty of his fellow-men sets to work to weave all sorts of strange stories about him. One of the best known of modern myths, one that has been repeated and believed by many, is the story of the violinist Paganini having learned to play wonderfully on one string, through his having been imprisoned for many years and having obtained a violin with only one string. Stories of like nature have grown up about many men who have, in virtue of their abilities, or even their crimes, become the objects of the wonder,

or envy, or admiration of their fellows. They serve to illustrate that insatiable desire for the marvelous that is inherent in humanity, which is ever ready to seek in the supernatural the explanation or origin of that which is new or unfamiliar.

II.

SOME FACTS IN THE GROWTH OF MUSIC.

HAVING treated in my first essay of some of the mythical accounts given by various people concerning the origin of music, I will in this essay attempt to sketch what seems to be the order in which the various advances in the art of music were made, from its crude beginnings to its present luxuriant condition.

In the investigation of ethnical phenomena it has often been found that more trustworthy results may be obtained by studying the actual condition of races now living, in various stages of barbarism,

their customs, arts, and beliefs, than by weaving elaborate hypotheses about the scanty remains of races that have forever passed away. For example, if we find a tribe which still uses stone or horn implements, we gain more accurate and more complete knowledge from observing how they make and use these implements than we can get from volumes of ingenious speculation written in the best appointed museums. And then, without actual observation there is always an underlying suspicion that the most plausible hypothesis may, after all, be totally erroneous.

It rarely happens that the attempt to reconstruct a forgotten art meets the signal success that attended one of which I had the good fortune to be a witness. The celebrated student of Indian life, and martyr to his scientific ardor, Colonel Cushing, after much laborious

study discovered the ancient Peruvian art of weaving by which were produced such curious fabrics. He illustrated his discourse by weaving a small piece of this cloth. At the close of the lecture, a gentleman came forward and said that he had just returned from South America, where he had visited some hitherto unknown Indian tribes, and confirmed the accuracy of Colonel Cushing's rediscovery with the words: "I have seen the South American Indian women hundreds of times weaving cloth in just that way."

As to music, we have only the vaguest and most unsatisfactory accounts of its condition, even among the highly civilized nations of antiquity; and to obtain any trustworthy knowledge of the growth of the art, we must turn our attention to the condition in which it exists among savage and semi-civilized people at the present time.

Some Facts in the Growth of Music.

To get into the right attitude towards primitive music, we must first divest ourselves of nearly every trait that *we* look upon as essential to music; scale, key, melody, even rhythm must be given up, so that nothing remains but the succession of sounds of different but indefinite pitch.

Rowbotham, in his history of music, gives numerous examples of songs of South American Indians that consist of the constant iteration of two sounds, approximately a whole tone apart. Other examples take in three sounds; still others take in a fourth sound, but, strangely enough, it is not the next succeeding sound to the third, but is the fifth above the first sound, thus making a beginning of the pentatonic, or five-note scale,—a scale that exists in as widely separated parts of the world as China, Japan, North America, Scotland, and Ireland.

It is necessary to guard against the

error of making too wide generalizations from isolated instances. Hence it would be unsafe to say that the course of musical development has followed the same path in every case, or to say that wherever we find a people at any given point on the road towards civilization, we shall find all the arts, or any one of them, at the same stage of development which they have reached among another race that has reached the same point on that long uphill path. For example, the African bushmen are about on the same plane of civilization, or lack of it, as the aborigines of this country (that is, those out of contact with the white race). Yet the bushmen have a scale progressing by quarter-tones, and can make instruments upon which this scale may be played. A traveler relates that he amused some of these savages by playing an air on his flute; their comment was that "it jumped about too much."

The existence of a quarter-tone scale among a people so barbarous may be an unique case, but it should make us cautious about being over-confident in our speculations on the development of music. Still, we are warranted in drawing certain conclusions as to the main characteristics of primitive music.

First, the idea of key or tonality is entirely wanting. The idea of key is an outgrowth of harmony, and the art or science of harmony is only about two centuries old.

Second, it is often, or generally, wanting in rhythm. Savages possess the sense of rhythm, but their feeling for it is satisfied by the rhythmic beating of a drum or the shaking of a rattle. It is said by some observers that three Indians will beat each one a different rhythm on his drum, while the rest sing a song that is quite independent of any of these three rhythms;

and they have founded a theory of the exquisite rhythmic sensibility of the red man on this observation. To the writer it seems to prove just the reverse, —a view that has been confirmed by a close, well-trained observer, who has made an exhaustive study of Indian music in Canada.

Third, the relative pitch of the sounds in savage music — setting aside such remarkable cases as the scale of the bushmen—is very indefinite. Savage singers always slide from one sound to another, and are not by any means certain to slide the right distance every time. The late John C. Filmore told me that in one song, in which there was a leap of an octave, the singer was just as likely to make it a seventh or a ninth as an octave, and then to continue quite contentedly in the new key that would result from this error.

It is quite likely that music existed for

a long time and made many advances under these primitive conditions. There is a wide difference in complexity between the two-note songs of the South American Indians and the extremely interesting examples collected by Miss Fletcher among the Omahas. But music, like language, cannot grow beyond a certain point until some means has been devised to make a permanent record of it. The greatest advance possible without a means of recording is the adoption of a scale by selecting some sounds and rejecting others. When, or by whom, this was first done, and what was the nature of the scale we may never know. The wide diffusion of the pentatonic scale has led many to believe that it was the first scale to be adopted. But there are certain facts which appear to make it probable that the major scale is of equal antiquity and universality. The slowness with

which changes are made in the East is proverbial. The Burmese possess an instrument made of a series of bronze bowls. A specimen in the museum of the University of Pennsylvania gives the scale of A major. A dulcimer, the plates of which are of bronze, gives the scale of D major. In the same collection two marimbas (a sort of xylophone) from Africa give, one the scale of A, the other of D major. A number of Indian flutes, lately added to the museum by the director, are all pierced with six holes, and all give major scales, with slight allowance for defective piercing. These three examples, taken from such widely separated localities as Asia, Africa, and North America, all used by races that have probably used them from time immemorial, go far to prove that the major scale may be quite as old and as widespread as the pentatonic.

With our perfected system of notation it is such an easy matter to reduce the elusive material, sound, to order, that we are unable to appreciate the difficulties that had to be overcome by the first genius who undertook to make a record of these sounds. In my first essay I gave some account of the way in which the Chinese did it, by means of tubes of standard lengths. In Greece the same end was reached by the device of the monochord, a string of standard length put in a state of tension by a standard weight, and divided in aliquot parts by means of bridges.

The next step is of prime importance: having determined the series of sounds, it is then necessary to devise a graphic representation of them. Many curious contrivances have been, and are, used for this purpose, but the only one of especial interest to us is the plan invented by the

Greeks, as it has, in many particulars, survived to the present day in our musical system. To them we owe the adoption of the first seven letters of the alphabet to indicate the seven sounds of the diatonic scale. It is because they began their series of sounds on A (first space in bass staff), that we call that sound A, with the unfortunate result that our natural scale does not begin, as it ought, on A, but on C. We are indebted to them for many of our musical terms, such as Tone, Semi-tone, Chromatic, Diapason, Symphony, Orchestra; though many have changed somewhat in their meaning.

There were some complications in the Greek system of notation that have never been successfully unraveled, and as there is none of their music in existence, we are quite in the dark as to what it may have been.

The Greek philosophers, nearly all of

whom seem to have been in some sense musicians, have so beclouded the subject with misty, mathematical, arithmetical, and transcendental speculations that it is impossible to determine even the nature of their scale. One thing seems certain: that is, that music for centuries was simply melodic, as it is yet among by far the greatest majority of peoples. Whatever may have been the Greek system of notation, it seems to have soon disappeared entirely, its sole surviving fragment being the application of the seven letters to the diatonic scale.

During the early centuries of the Christian era the art of music languished, and had it not been that the Church adopted it, and that a long series of devout churchmen devoted their lives to its study, it might have died out, except in the form of ballads and dance tunes; or, of a surety, its development into its

wondrous modern forms might have been delayed for centuries.

Music as a great art is preëminently the Christian art. These early churchmen, whose labors were devoted solely to the task of making music a fit adjunct to the service of the Church, little thought that they were laying the foundations of a new art.

The process was long and slow. It seems strange that in their first attempts to make a record of melody they hit on the clumsy expedient of the neumes, when they already had the sounds indicated by letters, and might have simply placed the appropriate letter over the syllable or word to which it was to be sung. The most that the neumes could accomplish was to indicate *when* the voice must ascend or descend, without telling how far it should do so. This was improved upon by the adoption of a

line, on, above, or below which the neumes were written; a further improvement was the discarding of the neumes and the substitution of square signs, like a modern whole rest.

Another system was the use of a staff of any number of lines, each space in which represented a degree, the words or syllables being written in these spaces. This system appears to have met with little favor, as a return was made to the neumes; but greater precision was given by using a staff, one of the lines of which was red and represented the sound of C; or one was green or yellow and represented the sound of F. Then, by a stroke of genius, some one discovered that it served the same purpose and was less troublesome to write C or F on the line (long afterwards G was also used), and we have the origin of our clefs, which are merely slightly modified and

ornamented forms of the letters C, F, and G.

Notation was now capable of indicating pitch, but not duration. So long as music was only melodic, the necessity for indicating the duration of sounds was not felt, especially as church music, as then practiced, was unrhythmic,—a mode of performance that still survives in the singing of Gregorian chants and plain song.

But when musicians began to experiment in putting sounds together, the necessity became apparent, and notes were invented to meet it. Unfortunately, their use was complicated by various clumsy expedients, such as prolation, to regulate their relative values. These were all swept away by the expedient of putting a dot after a note to increase its value, and by the invention of bars.

The machinery of notation was now complete; little has been added to it, and it is found adequate to the expression of every conceivable variety of rhythm, accent, pitch, and duration with perfect ease and precision.

While this system of notation was slowly getting itself into form, the question of scales was still far from settled.

While the ecclesiastical or untempered scales served the purposes of melody well enough, it was gradually discovered that they were unsuited for the purposes of harmony, except to a very limited extent; and, as keyed instruments were gradually brought nearer perfection, it was found to be impossible so to construct them that they would sound in tune except in a very few keys. The problem resolved itself into this: what series of sounds may be used that will, without being too numerous, make it

possible to begin a scale on every sound of the series; that will, with its chords, be near enough to perfect tune to satisfy the ear? The problem was impossible of solution scientifically, but it was solved empirically by dividing the octave into twelve equal parts. An Italian mathematician and musician, Zarlino, has generally been credited with this discovery, but later researches indicate that he was anticipated by a German, Andreas Werkmeister.

This discovery proved to be the keystone of the musical fabric. It was at once followed by an outburst of musical productiveness that made the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the golden age of music. This golden age began with Bach and Handel, and ended with Schumann and Mendelssohn. The life of one man, Clementi, covered the whole period; he was a youth of eighteen when Handel died, and he outlived Beethoven four years.

Such, in brief, has been the course of musical development from the earliest times of which we have any trustworthy records to the present time. There have been times when this growth seems to have been completely arrested, followed by times when its progress was very rapid. Improvements in notation and in the construction of musical instruments have always been followed by rapid advances in the art of composition.

During the first three Christian centuries there are very few references to music to be found. Pliny, in the second century, mentions casually that it was the custom of the Christians to sing antiphonally. The first definite notice we have belongs to the fourth century, viz., the founding of schools for the study of church music. What was the nature of the music taught we have no means of knowing. A little more light

was let in a few years later when Ambrose of Milan established the four scales, since known as the authentic scales, viz., those of D, called Dorian (after the Greek system); E, Phrygian; F, Lydian (the Greek Lydian began on F ♯); and G, Mixo Lydian.

Three centuries now passed without any record. Then Pope Gregory came. He added four more scales, each beginning a fourth below one of the authentic scales; these were called plagal, or borrowed, scales. Two centuries after Gregory, Charlemagne gave a great impulse to the study of music, by founding schools all over Europe for the study of Gregorian music. Up to this time music seems to have been melodic only, but shortly after the death of Charlemagne a monk named Hucbald appears to have made the first recorded attempt at the combination of sounds. He was followed by another

monk, Guido. The world owes a great debt to the studious monks of old. Guido is in many respects one of the most interesting figures we meet in the history of music. His contributions to the art were numerous and important. He is credited with many improvements in notation, with the invention of the hexachord scale system, and with the application of the syllables, still in use, to the notes of the scale.

The twelfth century was reached before notes were invented by Franco of Cologne, another monk. A short time after Franco, Marchettus of Padua wrote the first treatise in which rules were laid down for the combination of sounds. From this time the rate of musical development was constantly accelerated. Foremost in the race came the Netherlanders. What is known as the Belgian school began with Du Fay and ended

two centuries later with Lassus. At his death the scepter of musical supremacy passed over to Italy, where the old classical school culminated in Palestrina. Further progress was not possible under the old conditions. The new condition presented itself in the discovery of the tempered scale. Then the scepter of supremacy passed over to Germany, and the great period of modern music began.

When we consider the wonderful complexity of a modern symphony, or oratorio, or opera, it seems almost incredible that it has taken barely two centuries to develop these forms; still more strange does it seem that in the barbarous diaphony of the tenth century there lay the germ of modern harmony, and in the simple ballads and dance tunes, well called folk-songs, there was latent the stately symphony.

The history of music is an excellent

illustration of Spencer's dictum that "all progress is from indefinite homogeneity to definite heterogeneity." Folk-tune and church chant have grown and differentiated into countless styles, which are being constantly added to, as new composers of ability arise.

In conclusion, the musician should never forget that it was the *tempered scale* that made Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, and Wagner possible. It was the *want* of the tempered scale that retarded the development of music for so many centuries. The musician who is familiar with the history of his art is in no danger of being misled by the schemes of enthusiastic seekers after absolute tuning.

The adoption of any of these systems would be the utter destruction of all the music that we now look upon as the greatest possible expression of the art.

III.

LITERARY MEN AND MUSIC.

IT may be laid down as an all but universal rule that poets and literary people in general are not only ignorant of music but singularly wanting in a due appreciation of its position among the arts, and this in spite of the fact that they so often indulge in enthusiastic laudation of music,—an enthusiasm all too devoid of knowledge.

One of the commonest mistakes arises from the confusing of "agreeable sounds" with "music." They write of the music of birds, of winds, of waters; pleasant all these things are, but they are not "music"

except in a metaphorical sense. Sound, no matter how agreeable, does not become music until it is organized; definite pitch, definite relations of various kinds, and, above all, definite " forms " are the essentials of music.

Another very common error is to confound the music with the poetry. Poets and writers rarely refer to instrumental music, and when they do it is generally to its simplest forms,—dances or marches. When they write of music it is almost certain to be of *song*. This is probably a survival from the time when the poet was literally the singer; he is so called in poetry yet. But the gradual separation of these arts, that the growth of music as a " great art " has caused, has separated the two functions so widely that the poet to-day generally knows even less about music than the musician knows about poetry.

One of the best illustrations of this confusion may be found in an essay by Carlyle. He was somehow persuaded to attend a performance of *Don Giovanni*, and he writes his impressions of Mozart's masterpiece. Not a word does he say about the music, but he falls foul of Mozart for not following the example of the Greek poet Tyrtæus, who "sang" patriotic songs that roused his countrymen to beat back their enemies. Thus he condemns Mozart, the artist in *music*, for not being like Tyrtæus, the artist in *poetry*. Then, with characteristically grim humor, he seizes on the ballet, for which Mozart was in no way responsible, and compares the poor ballet-dancers to "so many frantically jumping scissors with the point of one blade stuck in the ground and bid to 'stand, in the devil's name.'" And this is all that the greatest literary man of the age could find to say

about the greatest musical "art work" of its kind in existence.

The very rarity of literary men who write knowingly of music is of the nature of those exceptions that are said to prove the rule. Foremost among these exceptional ones stands Shakespeare; he is full of references to music, of such a kind as make it evident that he was familiar with the "art music" of his time. One might almost construct a primer of seventeenth century music from his allusions. He writes knowingly of the hexachord, of part music, of various instruments, plain song, descant, quatrible, and quinible singing,—in fact, in music, as in everything else, he seems in some way to have absorbed all the knowledge of his time.

The next great exception was Milton. He was the son of one of the best madrigalists who contributed to the *Triumphs*

of Oreana; he was trained in the art, counting among his many accomplishments that of playing the organ. Consequently, all his references to music are intelligible and correct. Counterpoint was never so beautifully defined as in the oft-quoted lines in *L'Allegro:*

"In notes with many a winding bout
Of linkèd sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of Harmony."

Nor a cathedral service, as in the lines from the contrasted poem, *Il Penseroso:*

"Then let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness through mine ear
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes."

Among poets of the first rank there is

only one other exception; for the musician, the most important of the three,—Robert Browning. He had the advantage of thorough musical training and thought seriously at one time of making music his life-work. One result of this training has been that he has treated music with a fullness of knowledge and sympathy far beyond that of any other literary man. Four of his poems are devoted exclusively to music, and they display a profoundness of insight, and a practical and theoretical knowledge that make these poems worthy of the careful study of every thoughtful musician. In *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha* we find a statement of the inadequacy of the purely mechanical, soulless, old contrapuntal style to express the emotion that ought to be the aim of music. In a *Toccata by Galuppi* is a statement that music is a reflection of the life and thought of the period that gave it

birth. In *Abt Vogler* is set forth the fact that music is, in a peculiar degree, an evolution from the inner consciousness, and therefore at the same time the most human and divine of the arts.

Parleyings with Charles Avison is a profound investigation into the reasons of the power of music to express emotion, and why the music that at one period seems the most perfect expression of an emotion should at a later period seem utterly dead, as if its emotion had evaporated like the perfume of a withered flower.

After Milton the next poet of any eminence was Dryden, but he treated the subject in the conventional Greek fashion, attributing certain wonderful effects to "modes," which effects, if ever produced, were due to the poetry rather than to the music.

There was at the beginning of the

eighteenth century a sort of sham enthusiasm for Greek "culture," which is well exemplified in an ode by Collins, called *The Passions*. He pathetically calls on musicians to "revive the just designs of Greece," or, in other words, to give up melody, harmony, and counterpoint, and also all the rapidly improving musical instruments, and return to the monotonous chant, accompanied by an eight-stringed lyre and a flute made from the leg-bone of a crane. Of course this view had its origin in that confusion of the *poet* with the *musician* that misled Collins as it did Carlyle. One of the foremost advocates of these imaginary "just designs of Greece" was Sir William Temple. He, according to Hawkins, while contending earnestly for the superiority of Greek music, frankly confessed his "utter incapacity to judge about it." His views may be judged of

by the following delicious piece of absurdity from his *Essay on Ancient and Modern Learning:*

"What are become of the charms of music, by which men and beasts, fishes, fowls, and serpents were so frequently enchanted, and their very nature changed; by which the passions of men are raised to the greatest height and violence, and then so suddenly appeased, so as they might be justly said to be turned into lions or lambs, into wolves or into harts, by the powers and charms of this admirable art? 'T is agreed of all the learned that the science of music so admired by the ancients is wholly lost in the world, and that what we have now is made up of certain notes that fell into the fancy or observation of a poor friar in chanting his matins: so as those two divine excellencies of music and poetry are grown in a manner to be little more but the one

fiddling and the other rhyming, and are indeed very worthy the ignorance of the friar and the barbarousness of the Goths that introduced them among us."

The great literary arbiter of the eighteenth century, Dr. Johnson, found nothing more to say about music than that it was "a less unpleasant kind of noise," although Boswell, to be sure, tells a story of his being very much affected by a quartet of horns which he heard at a funeral. Possibly the occasion had more to do with it than the music.

It is rather remarkable that a fine rhythmic sense may exist without the least melodic sense. Many poets whose lyrics have proved inspirations to generations of song writers have been utterly unmusical themselves. Walter Scott is a shining example; the rhythmic "lilt" of his lyrics is irresistible, yet he confessed his inability to distinguish one tune

from another, and said he got more pleasure from listening to a bagpipe than from any other kind of music.

In striking contrast to Browning's interest in music is the almost entire absence of allusion to it in Tennyson. His allusions are always vague, and give the impression that he knew very little and cared less about it. There is but one case in which he makes a definite allusion to music,—in *Maud;* but he makes the "flute, violin, and bassoon" do duty for the whole orchestra (perhaps synecdochically), and the dancers are made to "dance in *tune*,"—by what figure of speech it would be difficult to say.

A very striking book has been published of late, called *Ruskin on Music.* This book was not written by Ruskin, but is a compilation from his writings, of references to music. Its interest lies in

the fact that it indicates a continually growing interest in music as a "great art" that culminates in enthusiastic admiration. This is an example of rare open-mindedness on the part of a literary man, forming a strong contrast to the half-supercilious, patronizing way in which they generally treat this subject, like the great Goethe's condescending patronage of "our Felix," and his "eying askance" of Beethoven, whom it was impossible to patronize.

A certain famous English poet and man of letters who visited America some years ago, met at a reception given in his honor by a prominent Philadelphian, a well-known musical amateur who had set to music one of the poet's lyrics very successfully. The poet praised the setting, but said it was not his idea of what the right kind of melody for these words ought to be, adding, "Come, let us find

a quiet corner and I will give you my idea." They did so, and the poet growled through his poem on two or three notes "below the bass clef," without either time or tune, and wound up with, "Now, *that 's* the kind of melody these words ought to have."

This poet's idea of melody was on a par with a certain worthy, learned, western bishop's idea of "choral." When about to officiate in a city church, he sent a message to the organist to come to the vestry, and then and there impressed on the "music man" that, for that day at least, the service must be "choral, purely choral." He repeated the word so often that it struck the organist that it would be well to ascertain just what he meant by "choral." In reply to the organist's question, the bishop, with a look of infinite surprise and pity for his ignorance, said, "Why!

music that everybody knows, of course,—like *Brattle Street* or *Rathbun*."

As a set-off to these unmusical literary men, the following story of an unpoetical musician may be related. Henry Lawes, the friend of Milton and the composer of the music to *Comus*, was so little impressed with the beauty of the final couplet of the *Echo Song*,

"So may'st thou be transplanted to the skies
And lend new grace to all Heaven's harmonies,"

that with dull musical pedantry he changed it to

"So may'st thou be transplanted to the skies
And *hold a counterpoint* to all Heaven's harmonies."

The story can hardly be true, else surely Milton, God-fearing man of peace and Puritan though he was, would have risen

up and smitten him as Samuel smote Agag.

Turning from the poets to the novelists, the three great names of Thackeray, Dickens, and George Eliot naturally present themselves. George Eliot was an accomplished musician, and all the references to music in her writings display her knowledge and appreciation of the art. But we may search in vain for the least indication of either knowledge of or sympathy with music in the works of Dickens or Thackeray. Allusions in plenty there are, but they are either of the ordinary literary type, or else half or wholly satirical,— indications of the ordinary attitude of cultivated people— that is, literary people — towards music; that is, that ignorance of it is a thing on which to pride one's self, and that those who profess enthusiasm for its higher forms, especially the symphonic, are

amiable idiots, to be tolerated and laughed at by those of superior intelligence.

As to Dickens, the humor of some of his musical vaticinations is irresistible; witness the following description of an amateur, from *Dombey and Son:*

"After knocking once at the door and getting no response, this gentleman sat down on a bench in the little porch to wait. A certain skilful action of his fingers as he hummed some bars and beat time on the seat beside him seemed to denote the musician, and the extraordinary satisfaction he derived from humming something very long and very slow, which had no recognizable tune, seemed to denote that he was a scientific one." (With the laity, scientific music always means music they do not like.) "The gentleman was still twirling a theme which seemed to go round, and round,

and round, and in, and in, and in, and to involve itself like a corkscrew twirled upon a table without getting any nearer to anything, when the door opened," etc. On another occasion this same gentleman is described as "whistling accurately through the whole of Beethoven's *Sonata in B.*" Very amusing, but hardly just towards the "art of music"; still, a perfect picture of the attitude of the generality of literary men towards "scientific music."

In *Martin Chuzzlewit* there is an account of a serenade which, in addition to its humor, is doubtless a true picture of many similar attempts to make music. When "Todgers's boarding-house rises to the occasion," to do honor to the arrival of the Misses Pecksniff, "one gentleman took the tenor, another gentleman took the bass, and the rest took what they could get." The extemporaneous

efforts of amateurs at part-singing could not be more aptly described.

In the writings of the gentle satirist, Thackeray, there are several allusions to music, or rather to musicians, in which he exposes the humbug and pretension that characterize too many of the professors of the art, or makes merry over the inanities of the " words " of popular songs or operas. One of his short stories, *The Ravenswing*, is devoted to the history of a singer, and incidentally to that of the various teachers and impresarios into whose clutches she fell. There is an inimitable description of a teacher named Baroski,—vain, greedy, lying, villainous in every way, yet a master of the art of singing. The portrait is so true to nature that some well-known London teacher must unconsciously have sat for it.

Baroski's school and his pupils are photographed as follows : " Benjamin

Baroski was one of the chief ornaments of the musical profession in London; he charged a guinea for a lesson of three quarters of an hour, abroad, and had furthermore a school at his own residence, where pupils assembled in considerable numbers, and of that curious mixed kind which those may see who frequent these places of instruction. There were very innocent young ladies with their mammas, who would hurry them off trembling to the farther corner of the room when certain doubtful professional characters made their appearance. There was Miss Grigg, who sang at the Foundling; Mr. Johnson, who sang at the Eagle Tavern; Miss Froravanti, who sang nowhere, but was always just coming out at the Italian opera; Lord Simpetor, a tenor; Captain Guzzard of the Guards, a bass; Mr. Bulger the dentist, who was neglecting his gold plates and fillings for

his voice, as every unfortunate individual will do who is bitten by the music mania; pale governesses and professionals in shabby clothes, who were parting with their hard-earned little stock of guineas that they might say they were pupils of the great Baroski."

From Baroski the "Ravenswing" goes to another teacher who is the antipodes of Baroski, Sir George Thrum. This worthy is an incarnation of the most odious form of intense respectability, with a large and awful wife who is a dragon of virtue and propriety, who kept watch over the master and his pupils, and who was "the strictest guardian of female virtue on or off the stage."

Thackeray must have observed closely the manners of singing teachers, as he makes Sir George say to the "Ravenswing" that the first thing to be done is "to unlearn all that Baroski has taught

her." A good deal of the story is taken up with an account of the devices made use of by managers and teachers when about to bring out a new opera or a new singer. It is all very amusing, but, unfortunately, too true as a revelation of the seamy side of the musical profession. In this same story he has a fling at the "words" of songs and operas that does not in the least exaggerate the absurdities of these poetical effusions. Here are the words of a song, the copyright of which, he says in a footnote, is for sale for twopence halfpenny:

"Come to the greenwood tree,
Come where the dark woods be,
Dearest, O come with me!
Let us rove, O my love!"

And so on for four verses.

Here is an operatic gem:

"Tink-a-tink, tink-a-tink.
By the light of the star,

On the blue river's brink,
I heard a guitar
On the blue waters clear,
And knew by its music
That Selim was near."

Some fifty years ago, one of the most popular forms of piano music was the "air with variations." In one of his novels Thackeray satirizes this fashionable style of music in a very amusing way. At an evening party the governess is requested to play for the entertainment of the guests. She "performs" a set of variations on the air of a song that was very popular some half a century ago, entitled *Sich a Gittin' Up-stairs*. She begins by "gittin' up-stairs" in a leisurely manner; then she gets up with a run, two steps at a time; then she crawls up-stairs on all fours, and tumbles down to the bottom; then begins again to get up furiously, stopping to execute a pirouette

on every step; then dances lightly down, and after lingering for a while at the bottom, clears the stairs at a bound, executes a wild war-dance on the top step, ending with a sudden crash from top to bottom, where she lies exhausted. It is a pity that the wit that was keen enough to seize on the absurdities that belittle the art was not sufficiently enlightened to understand and appreciate all that lies beyond and above.

It is a singular circumstance that music is the only art of which people, while rather pluming themselves on their ignorance, will speak in the most dogmatic way. What musician has not heard some sweeping assertion about music prefaced with some such remark as this: "I don't know anything at all about music, but I know what good music is, and I think so-and-so"? It is greatly to be desired that the literary world might be

brought to understand that there is as great an art in music as in poetry, or fiction, or any other department of literature, one that makes as large demands on the intellect; and that hard thinking is as necessary an element in composing a great symphony as in writing a poem or a novel.

The people at large should be taught that there are as many grades in musicianship as in any other profession; above all, that a distinction should be made between the "performer" and the composer. The "performer" bears the same relation to the composer that the actor bears to the dramatist. True, in music the two are often united, but not necessarily so by any means. Unfortunately, the publicity of the great performers and their vagaries—too often childish and absurd—have given the prevailing tone to the general opinion regarding

music and musicians. This opinion is further strengthened by the trashy sentimentalities written about music and musicians, and by the impossible creatures delineated as musicians in such novels as *Consuelo* or *Charles Auchester*. There is only one great novel with a flesh-and-blood musician in it,—Klesmer in *Daniel Deronda*. The result is that a Mozart or a Mendelssohn are put in the same category with some piano gymnast, who helps his notoriety by letting his hair grow, like Absalom, or by playing such antics before an audience as suggest the simian companion of the street musician.

In conclusion, I would warn musicians not to follow the example of the literary world towards music, by adopting a like attitude towards literature. Especially should the musician study poetry,—not merely read it, but study its laws of form and construction. He will get many

unexpected lights on his own art, and learn the secret of how "good music" should be "married to immortal verse." Above all, if he reads intelligently, he will find in the infinite variety of literary "forms" many pregnant hints that will help him in the development of his own art. Beethoven is reported to have said that he never composed without having some great poem in mind.

IV.

SOME CURIOSITIES OF MUSICAL HISTORY.

HAVING treated in another essay of some of the problems of musical history, I will in this one cull, with occasional comment, some of the curiosities that this history offers. The chief difficulty is to decide when and where to begin, there is such an embarrassment of riches. But as it always gives an air of learning to a discourse to begin with the Greeks and Romans, I cannot do better than follow this time-honored precedent.

These "curiosities" are not only entertaining, but much instruction may be gathered from them as to the progress of

the art and the estimation in which it and its practitioners were held. Of Greek music we know absolutely nothing, except that it was chiefly vocal, and most likely some sort of a chant. Of instrumental music they must have known next to nothing, if we may base an opinion on the representations of their instruments, which seem to have been few in number and of feeble powers. The most important was the lyre, the strings of which varied from four to fifteen, although eight was the usual number. The lyre furnishes us with one curious story. A certain poet (remember that the poet and musician were always one and the same person in Greece) named Eunomus was challenged to a trial of skill by another poet, Aristonus. While Eunomus was performing, a string of his lyre broke, and immediately a grasshopper which had been

listening in rapt attention flew up and perched upon the lyre, and every time the poet required the note of the broken string, this inspired grasshopper emitted a " skreigh " of exactly the right pitch. The foolish jury awarded Eunomus the prize, evidently unfairly, since poet *versus* poet plus grasshopper was no part of the original challenge. Several things may be learned from this story: first, that the Greeks did not always tell the truth; next, that their taste in musical sounds must have been rather peculiar. That the ancients did take pleasure in the sound of this little insect we have ample confirmation in the well-known fact that they kept cicalas — a kind of grasshopper —in cages, and enjoyed the noise they made.

The flute was held in great estimation at one time, and contests in flute-playing were held at the Olympic and other

games. The contestants were compelled by law to wear a sort of leather muzzle called a capistrum. The passing of this law was occasioned, so the story goes, by the following circumstance: a favorite flute-player, who had won the prize several times, was determined to outdo all his previous efforts, and he blew so hard he burst a hole in his cheek. The law was meant to prevent the recurrence of such a distressing accident. Evidently Greek taste thought loudness an element of musical beauty.

Of the music of ancient Rome little is known except that it was borrowed from Greece, and so little esteemed was the profession of music that it was practiced only by slaves and freedmen. There existed a school of flute-players (called tibicenists, from *tibia*, the shin-bone), the object of which was to train flute-players for the public festivals, but alas for the

credit of musicians! these flutists were notorious, even in the worst period of Roman history, for their drunkenness and excesses of every kind.

These flute-players once went on a strike because they had been forbidden to carry on their carouses in the temple of Jupiter; so they left Rome in a body and went to the neighboring town of Tibur, just before some great festival was to be celebrated. The Roman officials tried in vain to persuade them to return, when the magistrates of Tibur came to their assistance with a cunning stratagem. They gave a great feast to which they invited the flute-players. Then they plied them with wine until they were completely stupefied, when they were loaded into wagons, taken back to Rome, and shut up safely in the temple of Jupiter to sleep themselves sober again. They were so furious at the trick played

on them, that to placate them the authorities not only gave them permission to feast at will in the temple, but gave them the additional privilege of celebrating their return, annually, by a tremendous "spree."

Passing on into Christian times, the first utterances we meet concerning instrumental music are fierce, oft-repeated denunciations from the Christian fathers. Tertullian, Lactantius, and Chrysostom denounced the flute, harp, and cymbals as instruments of deceit that seduced the hearers to idolatry, intemperance, and all manner of evils. While we may be inclined to smile at the severity of these denunciations of what to us seems a very harmless amusement, we must not forget that there were excellent reasons for them, as the use of these instruments was indissolubly associated with all the excesses and enormities of heathenism,

which in this, the time of its decadence, resorted to every device that might attract the senses and aid it in its death struggle with Christianity.

The power of music as an aid to religion was soon recognized by the new religion, and the work of reducing it to a system received the careful attention of a long succession of able churchmen. For many years this music was exclusively vocal, hence it was that vocal music developed a high degree of excellence, while instrumental music led a vagabond existence in the persons of wandering minstrels, who played on various strange instruments now become obsolete. In the course of time the condition of these minstrels improved somewhat, and they were received with delight in the noble's castle as well as in the farmhouse or humble hostel. Even the monasteries did not disdain to shelter

them, and to enjoy in return their performance of the popular music of the day. So popular did minstrelsy become that it was a common occurrence for wanderers to claim food and shelter on the plea that they were minstrels. Two mendicant friars came to grief on an occasion from this cause. They applied for a night's lodging at a Benedictine monastery, were well entertained by the monks, and were requested, after supper, to reward their entertainers with some music. Being obliged to confess their inability, the monks were so angry that they beat the poor friars nearly to death, and thrust them out of the house.

In England the palmy days of minstrelsy were at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries. At the marriage of Queen Eleanor's daughter to the Earl of Gloucester, four hundred and twenty-six minstrels

were employed, and a sum equal to about six thousand dollars was distributed among them. The minstrels were associated in guilds; the chief officer of the guild was called the king. At a grand court ceremony held by Edward before his expedition to Scotland that resulted so disastrously at Bannockburn, there were six of these minstrel kings present, and so many minstrels that about twelve thousand dollars were required to pay them.

The number of these wanderers increased so rapidly that it became necessary to pass a law that not more than three or four should apply on the same day at the houses of "prelates, earls, and barons" for "meate and drinke."

Among the numerous instruments of this time, a small bagpipe, called a "cornemuse," was a great favorite, especially with pilgrims, as may be seen in the *Canterbury Tales*. A curious reason for

this partiality of the pilgrims for this instrument is set forth in an old state paper, as follows: "If one of the pilgrims goeth barefoot and striketh his foot and hurteth it that it bleed, it is well that his fellow play his bagpipe to cheer him and drive away the thought of his hurt."

Minstrelsy declined rapidly from the fourteenth century, yet as late as the sixteenth the minstrel was a more important personage than the traveling preacher. At a meeting of the Stationers' Company in 1560, they employed a preacher to whom they gave six shillings and twopence, and a minstrel to whom they gave twelve shillings. Whether it be that the minstrels have wondrously improved or that preachers have deteriorated in these latter days, certain it is that many a "minstrel" gets more for a single evening's performance than many a preacher for a year's hard work.

The large sums paid to great singers now are in striking contrast to the pittances received by their remote predecessors, as may be seen by the following entries in the privy purse accounts of Henry VII.: "To a woman that singeth with a fiddell, two shillings." "To the woman that sange before the king and queen, six shillings and threepence." Fancy Eames or Melba singing before royalty for two shillings, or even six shillings and threepence!

During the reign of Henry VIII., himself a musician of no small skill, the cultivation of instrumental music began to grow rapidly. The lute, recorder, virginal, and the viols became the amusement of people of the highest rank, with the natural result that minstrelsy rapidly declined until it became almost extinct, to be revived in the present century in the pestilent form of the hand-organ and

street-piano. So widespread became the practice of instrumental music, that every trade had not only its special songs, but its special instruments. A man who tried to pass himself off as a shoemaker was detected because he could not play either the flute or trumpet, nor could he reckon up his tools in rhyme. In a book published in 1622, called *The Compleat Gentleman*, the author says: "Though I will not go so far as the Italian proverb that says, 'Whom God loves not, that man loves not music,' yet I am verily persuaded that they are by nature very evil disposed, and of such a brutish stupidity that scarce anything else that is good and savoreth of virtue is to be found in them,"—a sort of prose version of the oft-quoted lines about the man "who is not moved by concord of sweet sounds" being fit for "treason, stratagem, and spoils."

We get many curious glimpses into the domestic life of our ancestors in old account books, such as were kept by the stewards of great men. There is such an account book extant that was kept by the steward of the fifth Earl of Northumberland in the sixteenth century. This earl maintained a large force of singers to perform his daily chapel service; this force consisted of a dean, an organist, and a number of men called gentlemen of the chapel, and boys called children of the chapel. The dean received four pounds a year, the gentlemen of the chapel from four to six, and the children of the chapel twenty-five shillings each. Their bill of fare was very plain and coarse: for breakfast, a loaf of bread, a piece of boiled beef, and a gallon of ale; occasionally salt fish was substituted for the beef. For supper, bread, a "pottell" of beer (*i. e.*, two quarts), butter,

and salt fish. Poor and monotonous as this bill of fare was, their master, the powerful earl, did not fare much better. His breakfast was the same, with the addition of a quart of wine, and occasionally some fresh herrings or sprats; and for dinner some boiled mutton bones or a chicken were added.

Some of the greatest musical curiosities are to be found in the writings of musicians themselves, beginning with Pythagoras and his dream of the "music of the spheres," a fancy that has exercised a singular fascination on the minds of poets ever since. For centuries musicians wrangled over the nature of intervals, their arithmetical ratios, and their geometric analogies, finding strange mysteries in the facts that the proportions of one to two, or four to five, or of any number to any other number, were the same, whether the subject were sounds, or

numbers, or geometric figures, or Solomon's temple, or the solar system. One genius even found a strange relation between the ratios of the consonances and the measurements of Noah's Ark. He communicated his wonderful discovery to Sir Isaac Newton, whose reply was a masterly example of the non-committal.

The echoes of this wrangle have not yet quite died away, as every now and again some enthusiast proposes a "system" or a "key-board" which he fondly believes will realize that impossibility,—exact intonation. The writer, while examining one of these key-boards, played some ordinary modulations, such as are used universally. Their effect on this instrument was literally "fiendish." The comment of the inventor was: "Music has no business to go out of one key. Musicians are too fond of getting into keys away from the one they begin in,—

a good *psalm tune* never does." I could only reply that, according to present indications, there was little likelihood that the "music of the future" would be modeled on "good psalm tunes."

The great father of musical darkness in the Middle Ages was Boethius. Lucidity of style was seldom a characteristic of mediæval writers; like Shelley's Demogorgon, they "rayed darkness visible." Boethius knew nothing about music, but did not think himself thereby disqualified to write about it. The result was a ponderous, pedantic work that has done more to befog the subject than the combined works of all his successors. Here is a nice, simple explanation of the ratios of intervals: "There are five kinds of proportions of inequality, as, multiplex, superparticular, superpartient, multiplex-superparticular and multiplex-superpartient. Superpartient relations are divided

into sesquialtera, sesquitertra, sesquiquarta," etc. All of which is nothing but a cumbrous way of stating by how much one number exceeds another, for example: thirteen is three times and one fourth greater than four. In this mediæval language they would say, the proportion between thirteen and four is multiplex-superparticular, triple sesquiquarta. Boethius was a thoroughgoing Pythagorean; he says that "the theoretic branch of every science is more honorable than the practical. He is the only true musician who professes music, not in the slavery of execution, but in the authority of speculation." In these latter days the "authority of speculation" has been rather set at naught in musical and other matters.

The pedantic discussions of these mediæval authors often took the form of labored allegories. A writer named Claude Sebastian wrote one to set forth

the relative merits and demerits of plain song, *i. e.*, music without time or rhythm, and what was known as mensurate music, *i. e.*, music with time. He figured it as a war between two kings, brothers, who reigned over the adjacent territories of plain song and mensurate music. "The allies of the king of plain song were the pope, the cardinals," and, strange to say, "the Lutheran ministers." "Those of the rival king were mode, time, and prolation." Prolation was a complicated system for regulating the relative values of notes. "Each army was composed of notes, and the shock of war was so great that some of the notes received black eyes," an allusion to the introduction of black notes in place of the old open notes called "evacuatæ."

Another wiseacre discourses thus on the difference between the whole and half tone: "The tone and half tone may

be very aptly compared to Rachel and Leah, of whom it is related in the book of Genesis that they built up the house of Israel, for as Jacob was first joined in marriage to Leah, thus sound, the element of music, first produces a tone and then a semi-tone, and is in some sense married to them. The semi-tone, from which the symphony of all music is principally generated, as it tempers the rigor and asperity of the tones, may be aptly assigned to Rachel, who chiefly captivated the heart of Jacob, as she had a beautiful face and graceful aspect. The tone rendering a rigid, harsh sound, but frequently presenting itself, agrees with Leah, who was *blear-eyed*, and was married to Jacob against his will"; and so on with page after page of this wearisome stuff; and this was a text-book. Truly the "Gradus ad Parnassum" was beset with thorns in those days.

Some Curiosities of Musical History.

A French author of great repute begins his *Introduction to Universal Harmony* with an astrological discussion of what should be the horoscope of the perfect musician. He casts the nativity of such a person calculated for the latitude of Paris, and discovers that the unfortunate musician would enjoy a short life and meet with a violent death. This amazing *Harmonie Universelle* ends a treatise on instruments of percussion with a versification of the Athanasian Creed! and the book ends with an essay on the moral lessons to be drawn from pure mathematics. The author of this *Harmonie*, Mersenne, was a friend of the celebrated philosopher Descartes. Descartes contributed to the book a discussion of the mathematical proportions of musical intervals. This treatise was translated and published separately in England by a Lord Brouncker, with the following queer

title: *Renatus Descartes' Excellent Compendium of Music; With Necessary and Judicious Animadversions thereupon, By a Person of Honour.*

A favorite form of instruction-book was one in which various personified qualities or conceptions were introduced as interlocutors. "Ignorance," "Humanity," "Studious Desire," are frequently made to discourse together, sometimes in doggerel rhyme, like the following specimen:

Humanity:

"Prick-song (*i. e.*, written music) may not be despisèd,
For therewith God is well plesèd,
Honorèd, praisèd, and servèd
In the church oft-times among."

Ignorance makes a reply that shows he is not quite prepared to accept this as true, and, by the way, furnishes the

original of the story of the sailor's definition of a "Hanthem."

"Is God well plesèd, trowest thou, thereby?
Nay, nay, for there is no reason why,
For is it not as good to say playnly
'Give me a spade,'
As 'Give me a spa- ve- va- ve- vade'?
But if thou wilt have a song that is good,
I have one of Robin Hood,
The best that ever was made."

Humanity asks him to sing it, and then, craftily making it his text, leads *Ignorance* gently to the feet of *Studious Desire*, who begins his enlightenment.

Even a musician like Morley, one of the great madrigal writers of Elizabeth's reign, begins an instruction-book with a long, weary dialogue between Polymathes and Philomathes, in which the least amount of information is conveyed in the greatest number of words. We have improved on the "good old times" a little,

—at least we do not now write our instruction-books in that way.

A very shrewd summing up of the vocal characteristics of various European nationalities is given by a writer of the sixteenth century, who called himself Ornithoparcus, his name being Vogelsang. One of the forms that pedantry took was the Latinizing of proper names, translating them when possible, if not, giving them at least a Latin ending. His verdict was that "The English do carol, the French sing, the Italians that dwell about the courts do caper with their voices, the others bark, but the Germans —which I am ashamed to utter—do howl like wolves." Some excellent advice to singers may be found in his writings as to the pronunciation of vowels, and the proper manner of emphasizing their words. He was evidently a keen, shrewd observer, who kept his eyes and ears

open and "took notes" and "printed them."

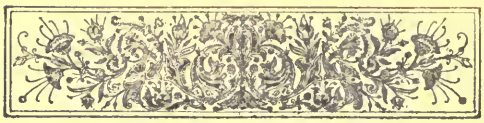
A musical folly not even yet quite extinct is the composition of pieces of instrumental music meant to describe actions or events, or other things that lie entirely outside of the province of music. An excellent German composer wrote an allemande to describe how Prince Thurm crossed the Rhine, in which the dangers he escaped are depicted — so says the author — by "twenty-six cataracts of notes." Another composer, Kuhnau, wrote the *Combat of David and Goliath;* another, Buxtehude, wrote a set of sonatas to describe the nature of the planets; and countless others have illustrated, or imitated, or described things in heaven and earth and under the earth. Even Beethoven wrote a pastoral symphony, with a cuckoo and a thunderstorm. Appropriate to all such imitative music is

the reply of King Agesilaus of Sparta to one who asked him to hear a singer who could imitate the nightingale: "I have heard the nightingale herself."

One might go on indefinitely citing these musical curiosities, for the supply is almost as inexhaustible as are the foibles of the professors of the art.

Like every other history, that of music is the story of chance discoveries, willful blindness, and owlish blundering. It is almost inconceivable why it should have taken centuries to discover or invent a thing so simple as musical notation. Even after the invention of the staff they blundered in adapting the notes to it; after they got the notes, it took years to discover the simple plan of making each one in the series half the value of the preceding note. He was a genius indeed who first put a dot after a note, and did away with the cumbrous system of prolation

and *tempus perfectus* and *imperfectus*. Authority has ever been the foe to progress. Pythagoras, in the persons of his expounders, Ptolemy, Euclid, Boethius, *cum multus aliis*, hung like a dead weight on the car of musical progress for centuries. It was the birth of the modern spirit of free inquiry that accelerated the development of music, as of all the other arts and sciences. In our time all the possibilities of the art have been explored, not without furnishing some notable contributions to its curiosities.



V.

THE TEUTONIC ELEMENT IN MUSIC.

THE question, To what is the "national" character of music owing? is as difficult to answer as it is interesting. This "nationalism" is easily recognized, but the moment we attempt to describe it, it eludes our grasp. Nor is this to be wondered at, for no art may be defined in the terms of another art. In our blundering fashion we often attempt this impossible feat, but always fail in the attempt. We speak of the "poetry" of a symphony or the "music" of a poem, some even call a painting a "symphony in color"; but these terms convey only the vaguest

metaphorical meanings, if any; hence we may well despair of finding any words which will enable us to say why we recognize one melodic and rhythmic succession of sounds as German, another as Italian, another as French, and so on.

The difficulty is increased when we find that during the period of the old classical school the "art music" exhibited none of these national traits; a madrigal, or a motet, or a fugue by an Italian composer differed in no respect from a like composition by a German or Englishman or Fleming. This nationalism, upon which so much of the character of modern music depends, seems to have suddenly made its way into the "art music," and emphasized its presence so strongly that henceforth German, Italian, French, and English music were to differ as widely as, or even more widely than, the manners and customs of these several peoples.

In searching for the origin of this nationalism we must turn to the "folk music" of the various peoples, the popular songs and dance tunes, — natural growths, innocent of musical learning. These may furnish some hints that may aid us in answering the question. Folk music exists in great abundance among nearly all peoples who have lived unmixed long enough to have become homogeneous, and thus to have developed what may be called a national temperament. The universality of this folk music gives rise to two very interesting questions: the first, already hinted at, is, Is there any genetic connection between the folk music and the art music of a people who have developed one? Secondly, why should an art music develop among one people and not among another, when both possess an equally copious and beautiful stock of folk music? The first

question is generally answered in the affirmative, but the well-known fact stated in the second question makes this affirmation at least doubtful. The object of this essay is to find, if possible, an answer that will satisfy the conditions of both questions.

It is universally admitted that music gives a more direct revelation of emotion than any other art, especially in the natural, unsophisticated forms it assumes in folk music; hence, if we can determine the temperament of a people,—that is, the blending of moral, intellectual, and emotional qualities that we recognize as national or racial,—we may get an inkling of the reasons why one race develops an art music and another does not. We will try to point out the most striking characteristics of the popular music of several peoples. It hardly needs to be said that these characterizations must be taken

with the limitations to which all sweeping generalizations are subject. To begin with the Italian, the popular music of Italy is characterized by smooth, graceful melody, by intense passion, or its opposite extreme, languor. It indicates a temperament in which quick, strong passion is combined with a keen sense of, and admiration for, sensuous beauty, but when not moved by passion it is too languid for sustained effort. This temperament presents just the right conditions to make Italy the cradle of dramatic music, with its rapid variations of mood, its passion and action, all kept within the limits of the beautiful by the ever-flowing stream of exquisite melody.

On the other hand, the Frenchman, gifted with a keen appreciation of style, always terse and delicate in his work, is as epigrammatic in his music as in his literature; and it is impossible that a

style chiefly characterized by neatness and terseness should ever develop into a large art form. The grace and self-poised perfectness that give such a charm to a *chanson* or a *genre* composition of Couperin cannot be stretched to cover a symphony. Even in opera, the indigenous French form is a series of delicately cut and polished jewels, strung together like beads on a necklace.

It is easier to characterize German folk music by negatives than by positives. It is entirely wanting in the strenuous passion and soft melodiousness of the Italian, on the one hand, and the neat precision and *savoir-faire* of the French on the other. It is quiet and self-contained, passion is tempered by reason, imagination is controlled by reflection. It is the reflex of the temperament of a sedate, thoughtful race, given to "high thinking and plain living"; a people to whom art

is as serious a matter as right living. German folk music is entirely lacking in the "catchy" quality of the brilliant French or sensuous Italian music, but these superficial qualities are more than compensated for by a purity and earnestness that make it haunt the memory long after the others have lost their charm.

The words of folk-songs give equally strong indications of the temperament of their authors; a very large proportion of these songs are, as might be expected, love-songs. But the differences in the expression of this universal passion are very striking in different races. In the Italian love-song the expression alternates between passionate intensity and ecstatic languor. In the French it is gay, with often a half-veiled cynicism.

The Italian is *divoto;* he abandons himself to his passion: the Frenchman is *galant*; he never forgets his "good form."

The German folk-song, when treating of this theme, is quiet and serious; the expression of love based on esteem, the love that has made wife, family, and home the most dearly cherished treasures of every branch of the Teutonic race. In the old English love-songs a sort of mixture of the French and German characteristics is to be found; many have all the purity of the German, added to which is a poetic excellence rarely found in the old German. Many are as decidedly French in their half-cynical treatment of the theme, and too many are disfigured by a coarseness that is very rare in the German folk-songs,—a collection of nearly two thousand, ranging from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, furnishing less than a dozen that have any suggestion of coarseness. It may be pushing our speculation too far to attribute the character of these English songs to the

influence of the French admixture that began with the Norman conquest in the tenth century.

There is a class of old English songs that has no counterpart in the German, French, or Italian: songs of a broad, good-humored joviality, often expressed in very coarse fashion, but just as often with a humor that may be sought for in vain in the songs of any other people; such, for example, as the *Leather Bottel* or *Back and Side go Bare*.

The most valuable plants are often those of slowest growth. Belgium, Italy, and England made great advances in the art of music before Germany discovered that it was her destiny to raise it to the highest pinnacle it has attained, or ever will attain. German composers were quite content for years to follow the paths marked out by the Italians. From Italy they got all the forms which they were eventually to

make their own. Thus, the opera had its birth in Italy, and the form given to it there served as a model for two centuries; but the stamp of serious meaning, deeper far than mere pleasure-giving, was added by Germany, notably by Glück. Mozart was satisfied with this form; even Beethoven was content to accept it, and by the force of his transcendent genius make it, in his solitary opera, the purest, loftiest expression of conjugal love that adorns the art of music, "the bright, consummate flower" of those qualities of which we spoke, as the most striking characteristics of the German folk-song when treating of the passion of love.

We turn now to instrumental forms, to see if they will yield any support to our argument. These forms began, as is well known, as simple dance tunes; after a while they were strung together in sets, to which the name of "suite" was given.

The only connection between the various members of the suite was identity of key.

The dance tune being sharply defined both as to rhythm and melody, we might naturally expect the French genius to excel in it. This expectation is met in the works of Couperin; the airy grace and delicacy of his work has never been surpassed; his suites served as models to the infinitely greater Johann Sebastian Bach.

More elasticity was given to the suite in Italy; the most illustrious among many great writers who contributed to its enlargement was Scarlatti.

The two great German contemporaries of these men, Bach and Handel, took the works of Couperin and Scarlatti as their models. Handel, whose genius lay in another direction, added little or nothing to the "form," although his genius enabled him to leave many beautiful examples of it. But Bach, whose genius was

decidedly "instrumental" in its bent, enlarged the "form" and gave a profounder significance to the music, going so far as to anticipate, in some degree, the qualities that characterize the music of Beethoven.

To Italy the world owes the invention of the "sonata," the greatest of musical forms. But Italy stopped far short of developing its full capabilities. Germany took it, and has distinctly made it her own, through the works of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and a numerous band of worthy successors to this supreme triumvirate.

It is proverbially easy to prophesy after the event, but it almost seems that a philosophical observer at the close of the last century might have said that Germany alone was fitted by natural endowment to develop this form, for the following reasons: An extended instrumental composition makes an equal demand on the

intellectual and on the emotional nature. The most perfect balance must be maintained between them, else, on the one hand, it will wither into dry pedantry without emotion, or, on the other, fall into a maudlin sentimentality without the bracing effect of intellect.

Patience and self-restraint are essentials to the construction of a symphony: patience to work out slowly the realization of an ideal; self-restraint to avoid prolixity and the temptation to seek for effects rather than for ideas. There is no more strongly pronounced German trait than that patience which will plod contentedly for years, sustained by the hope of realizing some cherished ideal.

In the quiet, serious character of the folk-songs we have an indication of this happy mingling of intellect and emotion, patience and self-restraint, unswerving devotion to high ideals, that has

made the symphony the supreme expression in music of the Teutonic temperament. No doubt it was a surprise to Madame de Staël to discover how much in earnest the Germans were about music, which drew from her her celebrated remark that "the Germans treat music like an affair of the state." It is just here that the reason for their superiority is found. Italy treated painting as an "affair of the state" in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with results that the world values more and more with every passing year.

We are justified, if the foregoing analysis is accepted, in saying that the part played by the Teutonic element in music is that it has raised it from the low plane of sensuous pleasure and given it an ethical signification.

It has been the privilege of one branch of the Teutonic family to make known the possibilities of this art, but their work

has become the possession of the whole world. Modern conditions are making the world more and more a sodality every day. The culture of each people is becoming the culture of the whole race. Art, in its highest manifestations, is beginning to be recognized as not of any nationality, but as based on principles that are universal and unchangeable. Hence, composers of every nationality have learned the lesson that Germany has taught, and are striving to follow the same path to the same goal. Much has been said of late about the founding of national schools of music on the folk-songs of a people, but there is surely some error here. It is mistaking a symptom for a cause. The symphony did not grow out of the German folk-song, but the German folk-song was an indication of the temperament that was necessary to the production of the symphony.

It is too late in the history of the world for any indigenous art of music to grow up, unless it should take place among a people shut out completely from the rest of humanity and ignorant of all that has been done in the art. Nor can any one by "taking thought" build up a school of music. All music from henceforth must take into account what has already been done in the art, and advance, if advance be possible, by building on it. The folk-song has as little to do with the noble melody of Mozart or Beethoven as the pretty prattle of an intelligent child with the weighty sayings of the same child when grown into a world-wise poet.

If we turn our attention to the case of those peoples who, though possessed of an abundant and beautiful stock of folk-songs, have never developed a great "art music," we shall find further confirmation of the theory that national temperament

is the chief factor in producing this result. The two most notable instances are the Celts and the lowland Scotch. Surprise has often been expressed at the fact that no Celtic people has developed an "art music," although no people display a more passionate fondness for music or possess a more beautiful folk music. We may find an explanation of this fact in the impulsive, mercurial temperament of the Celt, easily moved, but never long constant to one emotion, and utterly wanting in the patience necessary for long-continued effort. This is just the temperament for the production of melodies covering the widest range of emotion, unmatchable for beauty, or pathos, or gayety, or ardor,—melodies on which the constraint of "form" would act like frost on summer flowers.

Even more remarkable is the case of the lowland Scotch. With a temperament

diametrically opposite to that of the Celt, and a folk music quite equal to that of the Celt, one would think that they presented ideal conditions for the development of "art music."

But the Scotch genius is essentially lyric. The Scotch are a people of intense feeling, but reticent and self-restrained above all other peoples. When intense feeling joined with intense self-restraint must overflow, its natural outlet is the short lyric, and the demand for an outlet once met, the habitual reticence reasserts itself, putting a full stop to any desire to continue at length the expression of the emotion that caused the outburst.

It is probable that to this invincible reticence is owing the half-enigmatic character of the words of many Scotch songs; they hint obscurely at feelings and emotions that no true-bred Scotchman would for the world express openly.

These speculations may throw some light on the question, much discussed of late, concerning the coming into existence of an American school of music, which must be based, according to one high authority, on the "plantation melodies." But the notorious fact that many peoples have possessed a copious stock of beautiful folk music for centuries, yet have never developed an "art music," is a convincing proof that the rise of the "art" must be attributed to other causes. The great German composers have shown *how* themes must be treated to produce great works of art; to these conditions all great works must conform, until some better form is discovered.

The themes of such a work may be Slavic, or Scandinavian, or "plantation melodies," the only result of which will be to give a sort of quasi-local color to the composition,—a thing which is not

only non-essential, but which drags it down to the "particular" instead of lifting it into that high region, the home of all great art, where all "particulars" and "accidents" are merged in the universal. *The Tempest* and the *Fifth Symphony* are true to human nature always and everywhere. *Pickwick Papers* and a Grieg *Norwegian Rhapsody* (excellent things, each in its own way) are true to but a limited fraction of human nature. Dvořák's *American Symphony* is in no sense a development from indigenous American music. It is a symphony constructed in accord with the well-known plan that owes its existence to the Teutonic element in music. The only result attained by the choice he has made of its themes is that it sounds like the apotheosis of a "minstrel show."

In conclusion, Celt, Scot, Italian, Frenchman, Englishman, have all learnt

the lesson that Germany has taught; and all have done, and are doing, excellent work in the highest branches of the art. This excellence is in exact proportion to the fidelity with which they follow the lines laid down by the Teutonic genius that first raised music to a position side by side with the great sister arts of poetry and painting.

VI.

MODERN TENDENCIES IN MUSIC.

THAT law of constant change which dominates all mundane affairs, keeping them from stagnation, rules with equal force in the realm of art, and has been especially busy in the art of music during the last hundred years. For sixteen centuries the process of change was very slow, but it has worked with ever-increasing celerity since the establishment of the modern major and minor keys and the evolution of the laws of harmonic combination and succession. The appearance of each new composer has been the signal for a chorus of dissent from

the purists of his day, loudly condemnatory of his innovations and disregard of their rules. One of the earliest of these innovators was he who first sounded the seventh with the dominant chord, without preparation, and roundly abused he was for his temerity. When Glück arose and laid down what to us seem self-evident principles for the construction of dramatic music, the best that the great Handel could say of him was, "He knows no more of counterpoint as does mine cook." Strange to say, Handel's operas are forgotten, but Glück's are still occasionally heard. Sarti, a musician unknown except by name to modern ears, proved—to his own satisfaction at least—that Mozart could not write music; and Zelter, the friend of Goethe, and teacher of Mendelssohn, spoke of Beethoven's music as "aberrations and extravagancies." But genius, like wisdom,

is "justified of her children." Among wild, gregarious animals there exists an instinct which makes them put to death any member of the herd that is wounded. Among civilized men a reverse instinct prevails, which makes them attack with ferocity any one who by natural force is in any degree elevated above themselves. Especially do these self-constituted curators of the "arts" resent any iconoclasm towards the idols that they worship. They are ever ready to cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" unwitting that the reign of Diana is at an end.

A great change in the art of music took place in the last century, when the old classic contrapuntal school gave way before the new, modern, harmonic school. Signs of a coming change had appeared in many places at various times, but the rise of Bach and Handel may conveniently be taken as the point of departure of

modern music. The term "romantic" has been used to distinguish the modern from the ancient music. It is a difficult term to define; perhaps the nearest we can come to a definition is that it is music meant to *mean* something.

To the old contrapuntist, *expression* was an unknown quantity. The "words" he set were merely an excuse for an elaborate web of notes, in which imitation, canon, inversion, and all the artifices of counterpoint were the chief things to be displayed. In these two great landmarks between the old and the new —Bach and Handel — we may naturally expect to find both these kinds of music, and we do. For example, in the opening chorus in *The Messiah*, "And the glory of the Lord," the reiteration of one note to the words, "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it," while all the other parts are in motion, produces a powerful

impression of the immutability of the Divine word. The same effect, in even greater degree, is produced in the "Hallelujah chorus" by the sustained notes, each a degree higher than the last, to the words, "King of kings, Lord of lords," soaring over the tumultuous repetitions of "for ever and ever."

In music like this the imagination is set on fire, and Handel himself said of this chorus, "I seemed to see Heaven open and hear the shouting of the great multitude no man can number." This, then, is the romantic quality. It appeals to the imagination and quickens the emotions, and the *meaning* of which music is capable is brought home to us.

Turn now to the next chorus, "And he shall purify the sons of Levi," a masterly fugue, but we listen unmoved; there is nothing in the *words* to make any demand on the expressive power of

music, consequently the music never rises to the height of touching the imagination.

Bach had little of the dramatic feeling that is so strongly characteristic of Handel. Yet he occasionally flashes out with startling effect. In his great *Passion according to St. Matthew* there is a striking example in the chorus that follows the betrayal of Christ. The indignant wonder of the chorus is expressed in the words, "Why are the thunders and lightnings restrained in the clouds?" This ends on the chord of D major; then, after a pause, the chorus begins again on the chord of F♯ major, with the words, "Throw open thy fiery deeps, O Hell, and whelm in sudden wrath the betrayer." The effect of this pause and change of key is appalling.

The next great composer to arise was Haydn. He gave a new direction to musical expression by making it imitative.

Not satisfied by making it appeal to the imagination, he made it appeal to that lower faculty, the fancy, or, to put it in another way, the appeal was not *abstract*, but *concrete*. He would make you *see* the sun rise; if his text mentions the bleating of flocks or the hum of insects, you must hear the bleating and the humming. True, Handel tried this trick long before, but he did it clumsily, whereas Haydn did it so deftly, and with such beautiful music that, though one cannot forbear smiling when listening, it is impossible to wish it otherwise than as it is. That this imitative music is a false light in the art there can be no doubt. It bears the same relation to genuine music that waxworks bear to sculpture, or the biograph to a great painting.

The next great master, Mozart, carefully avoided the puerilities that delighted his predecessor, and sought for

purity and beauty, presided over by a calmness like that of Olympus. These qualities he never for a moment lost sight of, even in the most intense dramatic situations.

The next and greatest of all, Beethoven, threw aside as useless lumber everything that could not help to the expression of his profound musical thought. His is the only music that seems to come direct from a warm, passionate, human heart, on fire with the noblest ideals.

It has been said that he had no regard for, and little knowledge of, the contrapuntal art. This may be true as to such of its dry pedantries as Albrechtberger, his teacher, delighted in. But if those who make this charge will examine the first movement of the great quartet in C♯ minor, they will find that Beethoven could be contrapuntal when it suited him to use counterpoint as a *means* for the

expression of an idea. As the old classic period culminated in Palestrina, so did the modern classic in Beethoven.

The eminence of Haydn as a writer of descriptive music justifies his being called the typical writer of this class, while Beethoven may be regarded as typical of the ideal school. These two composers, then, may be regarded as the sources from which the modern schools of music have sprung.

The simple, frankly imitative music of Haydn has gradually broadened into the "program music" of to-day; the ideal school of Beethoven into the mysterious, formless, and generally cacophonous productions of the extreme modern school, which sets at defiance every rule as to key, progression, and form.

As soon as the contrapuntal system was abandoned, and music was constructed on the harmonic system, theorists

at once began to systematize the possible combinations and successions, and thus the art of harmony was evolved, still much hampered by the traditional rules of the old school. But every new composer of eminence extended the boundaries of these combinations and progressions, with the result that the *practice* of composers has always been in advance of the rules laid down by the theorists. To such lengths has this emancipation been carried that composers now disregard such universally accepted rules as those forbidding parallel fifths and octaves, those governing the movement of dissonances, and the use of second inversions, claiming that only thus can they express the wondrous depths of their musical emotions.

Protest against such license is unavailing, because the so-called laws of music are simply laws of taste, and taste is one

of the most mutable things in the world. The teacher of composition is often driven to say, "Well, the laws of composition are so-and-so, but you may break every one of them and find plenty of authorities to support you." Thus we may say that one of the most marked of modern tendencies is harmonic freedom.

To the old classic school, melody was of little or no importance, but with the rise of the modern classic school there came a wonderful outburst of noble, beautiful melody that has not even yet quite died away. Handel, Bach, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and lesser men have contributed to this imperishable wealth of melody. Foremost stands Beethoven, who possessed some magic power over the diatonic scale that made it yield such melodies as no other composer has extracted from it.

But the modern tendency is to discard

melody; an ultra-modern composer has a horror of making a "tune." His feelings are so "intense" that nothing but vague leaps, accompanied by dissonant chords, may do them justice; therefore, another modern tendency is to be unmelodious.

Among the discoveries made at the dawn of modern music, one of the most important was that in long compositions a certain order in the succession of keys and themes was productive of a more satisfying effect than any other. To this order the name of "form" is given. From Haydn to Mendelssohn these "forms" were found sufficient for the expression of the most varied content. But the new generation regards "form" as bondage, and makes keys and themes succeed one another in the most capricious fashion, so that another modern tendency is towards formlessness.

But, although we are losing some things that many still think are essentials of good music, it is not to be supposed that there has been no gain to offset the loss. The emancipation of harmony, despite the extravagances into which some composers have fallen, is a great gain, and it is quite possible that from the present formlessness some new and more beautiful forms may be evolved.

The most marked of modern tendencies is to be found in the opera. Opera has passed rapidly through several well-marked revolutions. It began with the recitative, and originated in an attempt to revive what was believed to be the ancient Greek manner of performing a play. This soon gave way to the introduction of "airs" or songs, which, in accordance with the taste of the time, were wonders of elaborate floridity. Little attention was given to the

" words," the same stories, always taken from classic history or mythology, being used over and over again. The singer and the music were everything. So little attention was given to appropriate scenery or costume that Cæsar and Antony, Alexander and Darius, used to appear on the stage in the full-bottomed wigs and broad-skirted coats of the seventeenth century. Then Glück came and laid down the principle that it was the business of the opera writer to express by every means in his power the meaning of the text and the dramatic situation. Of course he had to fight for it, but victory soon perched on his banners, and the old Handelian opera was dead, never to be revived again. But there grew out of it another form, which the genius of Mozart has made immortal, and which, in spite of the modern school, still holds its place on the stage, and is even yet capable of

producing works of great and permanent interest, such, for example, as Gounod's *Faust*, which is a slightly modified form of Italian opera.

The principle enunciated by Glück has been adopted by the modern school and pushed to its farthest limit; the modern writers have also reverted to the practice of the pioneers of the opera, having discarded melody and taken to continuous recitative. They have also revived an old artifice in the adoption of what might be called musical catchwords, viz., the "leit motiv," to give it the name by which it is best known.

The time has not yet come when we can say that the modern opera is a distinct advance on its predecessor. Many are convinced that it is. Many have exactly the reverse conviction, and can give some very sound reasons for it. We may at least say that to give up melody

for recitative and form for vagueness, looks more like atavism than progressive evolution.

There has, without doubt, been a deterioration in musical taste in some respects during the last fifty years, but, on the other hand, there has also been a widespread and ever-growing interest in the cultivation of the best class of music. This deterioration is owing, in great degree, to the facility with which bad music may be written on the harmonic basis. Doubtless there were many writers of bad music in the old contrapuntal times, but as it is much more difficult to write contrapuntally than harmonically they were doubtless not so numerous as they are at present, when every one who can invent or "convey" a little melody, and accompany it with the tonic, dominant, and subdominant chords, is dubbed a composer.

Modern Tendencies in Music.

When the great art of modern music came into existence it was a luxury within the reach of the wealthy and cultivated classes exclusively, but as time passed on it spread gradually among the people at large, who rapidly learned to appreciate it, and who are its most interested patrons at the present time. So that one of the most striking of modern tendencies has been the diffusion of good music among the people, brought about by the formation of choral and other musical organizations, and in very great degree by the generous liberality, in our country, of men of large means, who have made it possible for every one to hear the greatest of instrumental compositions, performed by orchestras of unsurpassable excellence.

But there are two factors of more importance than any I have mentioned that make for the spread of sound musical culture in our times. Already productive

of great results, they give promise of producing still more important results in the immediate future. First of these I place the teaching of music in the schools, public and private, all over the land. To those of us who are old enough to remember the crude, primitive methods that were followed thirty or forty years ago, and compare them with the well-thought-out systems of the present day, the change seems little short of miraculous. The work, for which the untaught "singing-school teacher" was thought sufficient, has been taken up by trained musicians and educators who have devoted years of thought to the elaboration of what seem to be nearly perfect systems of instruction, which must result in laying deep, broad foundations on which the musical future of America will rest. Of equal importance is the establishment, in all the principal

cities, of music schools and conservatories for special training in the art. It is impossible to calculate the effect these have had in elevating the standards of musical taste. Being equipped with large corps of trained teachers, following a thoroughly systematized course of instruction, and admitting only the highest grade of music in their classrooms, there is no agency doing more excellent work in spreading genuine musical culture.

In conclusion, it would appear that owing to the various agencies mentioned, the most noticeable of the modern tendencies is to a wider diffusion of music of the highest class. Many thoughtful observers hold the opinion that the great productive periods in all the arts have passed, never to return; consequently, there remains for us who have fallen on these latter days no new territory to conquer, but only to occupy thoroughly

the territories won by the giants of old, and bequeathed to us as a precious legacy. Fortunately, there is still room for us to work, even though we cannot write music like Mozart or Beethoven, or paint like Angelo and Raphael, or write poetry like Shakespeare and Milton. And no more useful work can be found than that of the teacher whose labors make the art that was at one time the luxury of the wealthy and high-placed the common property of rich and poor alike.